

After dark in Queensland

From sleeping on the Great Barrier Reef to animal interactions and award-winning evening dinner shows, there's so much to do once the sun sets on Queensland. Here are a few of the highlights...

A night out with the natives

Come and see what Aussies really get up to after dark at the Cairns Night Zoo! The evening begins with a delicious barbecue, before a spotlighting tour to meet the creatures of the night. Learn how owls hunt, touch a possum, pat a koala and walk safely through the crocodiles' lair. On clear nights the guides take the group star gazing to spot the Southern Cross, the Big Dipper and other well known constellations. Stop at a camp fire to enjoy billy tea and damper with a 'Swaggie' (an original Australian bushman) and his tame kangaroos. Back at the entertainment area exchange your torch for a cold beer or wine and join in the fun with some great Aussie folk songs and bush dances. www.cairnsnightzoo.com

Wildnight Adventures at Currumbin

After dark, Currumbin comes alive with activity in the Gold Coast's only night-time wildlife and traditional cultural tour. On arrival, the experience begins with a delicious Australian buffet, then take a walk on the wild side and get closer to Australia's native wildlife in a natural environment and experience spellbinding Aboriginal music, dance and culture, seven nights a week. You'll meet the koalas and see one of the biggest Saltwater Crocodiles in Australia and hand feed the mob of friendly kangaroos. In a clearing of Melaleuca trees, discover a fireside Aboriginal corroboree where you'll see traditional dance. The haunting sound of the didgeridoo echoing through the Sanctuary's natural bushland is a truly memorable experience. www.cws.org.au

Dolphin feeding under the stars

Hand-feed a pod of wild dolphins under the night stars of Moreton Island at Tangalooma Island Resort. Moreton Island is situated just 75 minutes from Brisbane and the highlight of any stay is the opportunity to interact closely with nature. Each evening small pods of dolphins eagerly swim up to the beach, adjacent to the well-lit jetty, where they are hand fed fresh fish by the resort's staff, marine biologists and resort guests. Whether you are feeding the dolphins or simply watching from the jetty, the experience is unforgettable. www.tangalooma.com

Indigenous experience with Tjapukai by Night

Discover the magic of Australia's ancient indigenous culture with Tjapukai by Night near Cairns. Beginning nightly at 7.30pm, the evening includes a welcome drink, traditional face painting, didgeridoo blessing, lakeside fire making ceremony, an indigenous dance performance by the world-renowned Tjapukai dancers and a dinner buffet. Choose from two, three or four course dinners or international, Australian barbecue, reef barbecue or bush flavours buffet dinners. The latter features uniquely Aussie taste sensations such as lemon myrtle reef fish, crocodile sausages or chicken with native mint yoghurt. www.tjapukai.com.au

A night climb with a difference

Scale to the top of Brisbane's iconic Story Bridge to see the city's sparkling lights and high rises from a different perspective. One of only three bridge climbs in the world, Story Brisbane Adventure Climb (SBAC) runs night climbs where groups of 12 enjoy stunning panoramic views of the city and its surrounds from an 80 metre high summit. The entire climb experience takes two and a half hours and is led by an experienced climb leader who provides a fascinating commentary about the history and heritage of their surrounds.

www.sbac.net.au

Australian Outback Spectacular

The Gold Coast's iconic Australian Outback Spectacular (AOS) has begun a new dinner show, 'Heroes of the Light Horse', which celebrates the link between the stockmen and the legendary Australian Light Horse. The atmosphere is electric, as every twist and turn of the show features a cast of larger than life characters, magnificent horses, stampeding cattle, camels and an array of rough and ready bush vehicles – even a helicopter! More than one million people from all over the world have visited AOS since it first opened in 2006.

AOS 2 has been directed by Australian film and television director, Simon Wincer, who is best known for movies, 'The Man from Snowy River', 'The Lighthorsemen', 'Phar Lap' and 'Free Willy'. The show runs nightly from Tuesday to Sunday and entry includes the 90 minute show, three course dinner, drinks and a stockman's hat. www.myfun.com.au

A ghoulish show at Draculas

Dare to enter Dracula's Cabaret Restaurant and you'll experience an unforgettable evening that will leave you breathless. Enter via Dracula's ghost train ride into the Theatre of the Vampire, where weird waiters and talented performers sink their teeth into a night of comedy, rock, puppetry and horror. Enjoy a two-hour fast-paced show that will thrill and entertain you, while devouring a three course dinner featuring fresh Australian produce, served with flair and madness. www.draculas.com.au

The Crocodile Sunset Cruise & Dundee's Dinner

Watch a tropical Cairns sunset as you cruise through Trinity Inlet, then pull back into the harbour to enjoy a three course dinner at a waterfront restaurant. The Crocodile Explorer Sunset Cruise and Dundee's Dinner package starts at 5.30pm with a 90 minute cruise where guests can spot birds, crocodiles and other animals while enjoying a glass of bubbles from the comfort and safety of a luxury catamaran. The cruise departs every night except Sundays and Wednesdays from the Reef Fleet Terminal and returns by 7pm when guests then enjoy a three course dinner at one of Cairns' most picturesque restaurants, Dundee's On The Waterfront. www.cairnshabitatcruises.com.au

Cheers and beers for night kayakers in Brisbane

Discover Brisbane's River from a different perspective on a night kayak tour followed by a traditional Aussie barbeque and drinks on the river bank. Brisbane's popular Riverlife Adventure Centre runs a Beer and Prawns night every Friday, and a Night Paddle and BBQ every Saturday night, which both begin with a 90 minute kayaking session on the river. A built-in light on the kayak illuminates the river for up to 600 metres so paddlers can take in the sensational city and river views before coming back to the shore for drinks and dinner.

www.riverlife.com.au.

The Reef by night!

Explore the wonders of the Great Barrier Reef after dark with a night scuba dive, or Reefsleep. Scuba diving operators along the entire length of the reef run regular night dives for keen adventurers to explore the underwater world of Queensland in a whole new light (or lack of it)! And in the Whitsundays, Reefsleep offers a whole new kind of reef adventure by night. Once all of the day trippers have left the Fantasea Reefworld pontoon, guests staying at Reefsleep have the whole reef to themselves - apart from a personal host and a few million fish! Sit back with a glass of champagne and watch the sun set and the stars rise, then check out the reef life from the underwater viewing chamber below. Two accommodation options are available at Reefsleep and breakfast on the reef is also included.

www.fantasea.com.au/reefworld/reefsleep.aspx

Flames of the Forest

Beneath the canopy of the oldest rainforest in the world, experience Australia's indigenous culture with the unique Flames of the Forest Experience. Set in an enchanting location in the heart of the World Heritage-listed Daintree Rainforest, Flames of the Forest is a spell binding candlelit experience that incorporates dinner, drinks and aboriginal performances. The evening includes return transfers from Cairns and Port Douglas, champagne and canapés on arrival, Aboriginal cultural performance with didgeridoo and storytelling and a three course banquet with Australian wines and beers. www.flamesoftheforest.com.au